REMARKS

Claims 1-3, 5-16, 34 and 36-41 are currently pending in the subject application and are presently under consideration. Claims 1, 2 and 37 have been amended as shown on pages 2-5 of Reply. Claim 35 has been cancelled. In addition, claims 39-41 have been newly added. The below comments present in greater detail distinctive features of applicants' claimed invention over the cited art that were conveyed to the Examiner over the telephone on May 14, 2008.

Favorable reconsideration of the subject patent application is respectfully requested in view of the comments and amendments herein.

I.   Objection of Claims 1 and 37

Claims 1 and 37 are objected to because of certain informalities. In view of the amendment to the subject claims, this objection should be withdrawn.

II.   Rejection of Claims 1-3, 5-7, 11, 13 and 34-38 Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 1-3, 5-7, 11, 13 and 34-38 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Knight, *et al* (U.S. 6,493,703) in view of Williams, *et al* (U.S. 2004/0210550). Knight and Williams either alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest all features of the subject claims.

The claimed subject matter relates to systems and methods that facilitate electronic data searching, and more particularly to systems and methods that employ a relevance function(s) to rank search results obtained from the domain of community archives for example, newsgroups. In particular, independent claim 1 recites *a system that ranks search results comprising a first component that determines a relevance of respective search results associated with one or more of a Usenet, a discussion thread, a blog, an archived community discussion, or a chat room via one or more feature-based relevance functions wherein features of the function are based at least on one or more global thread properties comprising at least a thread depth defined over a thread comprising at least a message core and a message body, one or more posting-specific thread properties **and attributes of a person comprising at least a number of posting per time duration, a number of newsgroups posted to and a number of postings that have no responses** and a second component that generates ordered search results based on their respective*

relevances. Knight and Williams are both silent regarding such novel aspects of the claimed invention.

Knight relates to an online message board system monitoring message traffic generated by subscribers so that intelligent decisions can be made concerning what types of content to locate and retrieve, what priority to use for locating such content and how to organize such content for ease of access by the subscribers. The Examiner acknowledges that the primary reference, Knight does not teach the claimed invention and provides a secondary reference, Williams, to compensate for the after mentioned deficiencies of Knight. Williams, given by Examiner, relates to a system and method for facilitating a self-organizing workforce of one or more workers through payment and recognition incentives, a set of configurable operating rules, and a set of credentials to represent the reputations and organizational capital of individual workers. The system includes a worksite having one or more configurable worksite rules where the one or more workers may work on an idea. Work includes posting to a discussion about the idea, voting on the idea, and recommending an outcome for the idea. However, it fails to teach the claimed invention.

At page 4 of Office Action, Examiner incorrectly contends that Knight teaches *features of the relevance functions are based at least on a number of posting per time duration, a number of newsgroups posted to and a number of postings that have no responses*, with respect to dependent claim 2. The cited portion of the reference (Knight) provides retrieving entries meeting a user's search/filter criteria. Because these entries are already indexed according to predefined subject matter area/class/subclass indices, a group of the same matching the user's criteria is easily and rapidly located. These entries are then transmitted to the user's computer system and presented in abbreviated listing format within a group listing area (*See*, Col. 11, lines 53-60). Hence Knight provides for only indexing the entries according to predefined subject matter area/class/subclass indices so that a user's query is easily and rapidly located. However nowhere Knight teaches or suggests *features of the relevance functions are based at least on a number of posting per time duration, a number of newsgroups posted to and a number of postings that have no responses*. Through this feature, the claimed subject matter facilitates building a ranking function based on the quality of a person's posted content. Attributes of a person who posts to newsgroups correlate with the quality of this person's posted content. Examples of author attributes include: a number of postings per year, a number of newsgroups

posted to, a number of postings that have no responses (no children in the message thread), *etc.* The relevance functions are tailored to efficiently and effectively rank search results from the community discussion domains.

At page 5 of the Office Action, the Examiner again incorrectly contends that Knight teaches *the relevance functions are refined based on a user's response to the ranked search results*, with respect to dependent claim 7. The cited portion of the reference (Knight) provides for tagging the reply posting with a parameter field if a user responds with a reply posting to an original posting in a particular subject matter area. The parameter field specifies that the reply posting should also be classified in the same subject matter area as the original posting (*See*, Col. 12, lines 23-28). Hence Knight provides for only tagging the reply posting with same subject matter area as the original posting. However, Knight does not contemplate *the relevance functions are refined based on a user's response to the ranked search results*. Through this feature, the claimed subject matter facilitates refining relevance functions based on user responses to the ranked search results. For example, if a user rejects results with relevance just above an acceptable level, the threshold can be automatically raised to mitigate presenting such information to the user in the future.

At page 5 of the Office Action, the Examiner again incorrectly contends that Knight teaches *the one or more features based relevance functions utilize features that comprise an occurrence of one or more of a word, a word class or a phrase in a thread position relative to a posting*, with respect to dependent claim 34. The cited portion of the reference (Knight) provides for each posting to be sorted out and tagged with one or more additional parameters specifying one or more categories which such posting should fall under. Every posting is analyzed by posting logic to determine where it should be classified by always tagging the posting with the posting's subject matter area/class/subclass (*See*, Col. 12, lines 16-18). Hence Knight provides for only sorting out a posting by tagging the posting with corresponding subject matter area/class/subclass. However nowhere Knight teaches or suggests *the one or more features based relevance functions utilize features that comprise an occurrence of one or more of a word, a word class or a phrase in a thread position relative to a posting*. Through this feature, the claimed subject matter facilitates utilizing *an occurrence of one or more of a word, a word class or a phrase in a thread position relative to a posting* to determine relevance of respective search results associated with one or more of a Usenet, a discussion thread, a blog, an archived

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community discussion, or a chat room. For example, if a string "thank you" appears in a child posting of posting P, that likely increases the probability that P is a quality posting.

In view of at least the foregoing, it is clear that Knight and Williams fail to teach each and every aspect recited in independent claim 1 and 37. Therefore, it is respectfully requested that this rejection of independent claims 1 and 37 (and the claims that depend there from) be withdrawn.

III.   Rejection of Claims 8-9 and 12 Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 8-9 and 12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Knight in view of Official Notice. Knight and Official Notice do not teach or suggest all the claim features with respect to amended independent claim 1 (which claims 8, 9 and 12 depend there from). Thus, the claimed subject matter as recited in claims 8, 9 and 12 is not obvious over Knight and Official Notice and hence this rejection should be withdrawn.

IV.   Rejection of Claims 10 and 14-16 Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 10 and 14-16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Knight in further view of Vanderveldt *et al* (U.S. 6,266,668). Vanderveldt *et al.* does not teach or suggest all the claim features with respect to amended independent claim 1 (which claims 10 and 14-16 depend there from). Thus, the claimed subject matter as recited in claims 10 and 14-16 is not obvious over Vanderveldt *et al.* and hence this rejection should be withdrawn.

V.   New Claims 39-41

Newly added claims 39-41 emphasize novel aspects of the invention discussed *supra* in connection with claims 1-3, 5-16, 34 and 36-38. Accordingly, these claims are patentably distinct over the art of record for at least the same reasons as are claims 1-3, 5-16, 34 and 36-38.

CONCLUSION

The present application is believed to be in condition for allowance in view of the above comments and amendments. A prompt action to such end is earnestly solicited.

In the event any fees are due in connection with this document, the Commissioner is authorized to charge those fees to Deposit Account No. 50-1063 [MSFTP594US].

Should the Examiner believe a telephone interview would be helpful to expedite favorable prosecution, the Examiner is invited to contact applicants' undersigned representative at the telephone number below.

Respectfully submitted,

AMIN, TUROCY & CALVIN, LLP

 /Himanshu S. Amin/
Himanshu S. Amin
Reg. No. 40,894

AMIN, TUROCY & CALVIN, LLP
24TH Floor, National City Center
1900 E. 9TH Street
Cleveland, Ohio 44114
Telephone (216) 696-8730
Facsimile (216) 696-8731